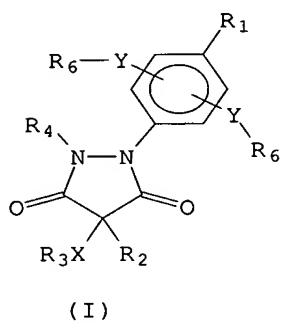


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

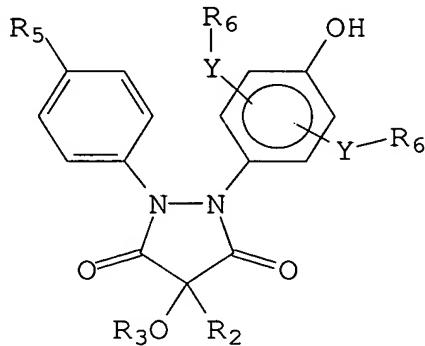
[[1]]1(currently amended). An optionally substituted compound of the formula I or a salt thereof;



wherein R₁ is O or S, R₂ is hydrogen or more preferably an C₁-C₁₀ organic group attached by a carbon atom, X is H, O, OO, S or SS R₃ is absent where X=H, is hydrogen or is a hydroxyl or thiol protecting group, R₄ is a hetero- or preferably homocyclic aryl group, optionally substituted with a further group R₅ one Y group is S and the other is either H (in which case only one R₆ group is present) or S; and R₆ is, independently, an organic group of molecular weight up to around 500 amu.

[[2]]2(currently amended). A compound as claimed in claim 1 wherein R₂ is an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkaryl, aralkyl, arylsulphonylalkyl or aralkenyl group, R₃ is hydrogen or a C₂-C₇, acyl, or alkaryl group, R₅ is an alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, OH, O-alkyl, thio, thioalkyl, halo, or primary, secondary, tertiary or quaternary amino group and R₆ is a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkaryl, aralkyl, alkyl ester, alkyl amide, alkyl acid, polyol, sugar, oligo(alkylamide), oligo(alkylester), or oligopeptide group.

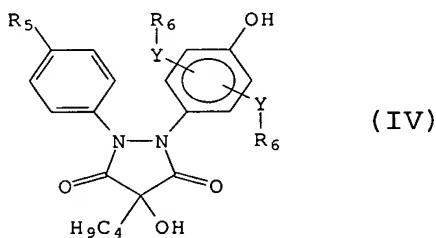
[[3]]3(currently amended). A compound as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 of formula III;



(III)

wherein Y, R₂ and R₃ are as described in claim 1 or claim 2 and R₅ is hydrogen or an alkyl, alkenyl group, OH, O-alkyl, O-acyl, SH, S-alkyl, S-acyl, halo, or amino group.

[[4]]4(currently amended). A compound as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3 claim 1 of formula IV, or a salt thereof;



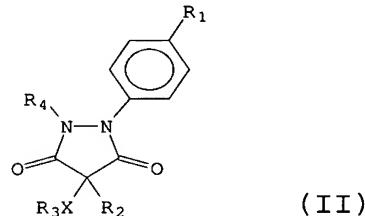
wherein R₅ is hydrogen or OH and each R₆ is, independently, a cysteine or a glutathione moiety attached via the sulphur atom thereof.

[[5]]5(currently amended). A compound as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4 claim 1 wherein both Y-R₆ groups are S-R₆.

[[6]]6(currently amended). A compound of ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1 wherein the two Y groups are ortho to group R₁.

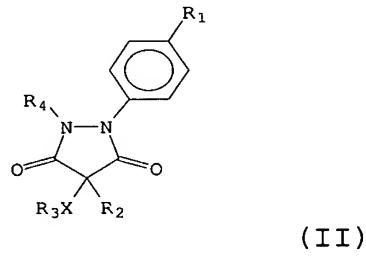
[[7]]7(currently amended). A compound of ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1 wherein one Y group is ortho to group R₁ and one Y group is meta to group R₁.

[[8]]8(currently amended). A compound formed by reaction of a thiol (R₆-SH) with a starting material of formula II



Wherein R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₆ and X are as defined in ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, or protected derivatives or precursors thereof.

[[9]]9(currently amended). A method for the synthesis of a compound of ~~any of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, said method comprising reaction of a thiol (R₆-SH) with a starting material of formula II



Wherein R_1 , R_2 , R_3 , R_4 , R_6 and X are as defined in ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~claim 1, or protected derivatives or precursors thereof.

[[10]]10(currently amended). A method of treatment of a mammalian subject comprising administering a compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1.

[[11]]11(currently amended). A method for the for treatment, prevention or control of a viral, autoimmune, neoplastic, inflammatory and/or allergic condition, said method comprising administration of a compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1.

[[12]]12(currently amended). A method of tonic treatment of an aging mammalian subject, or a subject suffering from the aftereffects of infection, disease or treatment, said method comprising administration of a compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1.

[[13]]13(currently amended). A compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1 for use in therapy.

[[14]]14(currently amended). The use of a compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1 in the manufacture of a medicament ~~for use in a method as claimed in any of claims 10 to 12~~.

[[15]]15(currently amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1 and at least one pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, carrier or diluent.

[[16]]16(currently amended). A functional or fortified food comprising a compound as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~claim 1 formulated in an edible food or potable beverage product.